



Asia-Pacific Counter-IED Fusion Center

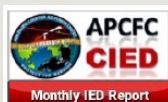
2017 IED Activity Report



DOI: 31 December 2017

About the APCFC

The Asia-Pacific C-IED Fusion Center is the premier center for irregular warfare analysis in the U.S. Pacific Command. The center develops and synchronizes C-IED and EOD programs and regional engagements. The center resources USARAPC C-IED training to ensure U.S., Allied, and Partner Nations survivability.



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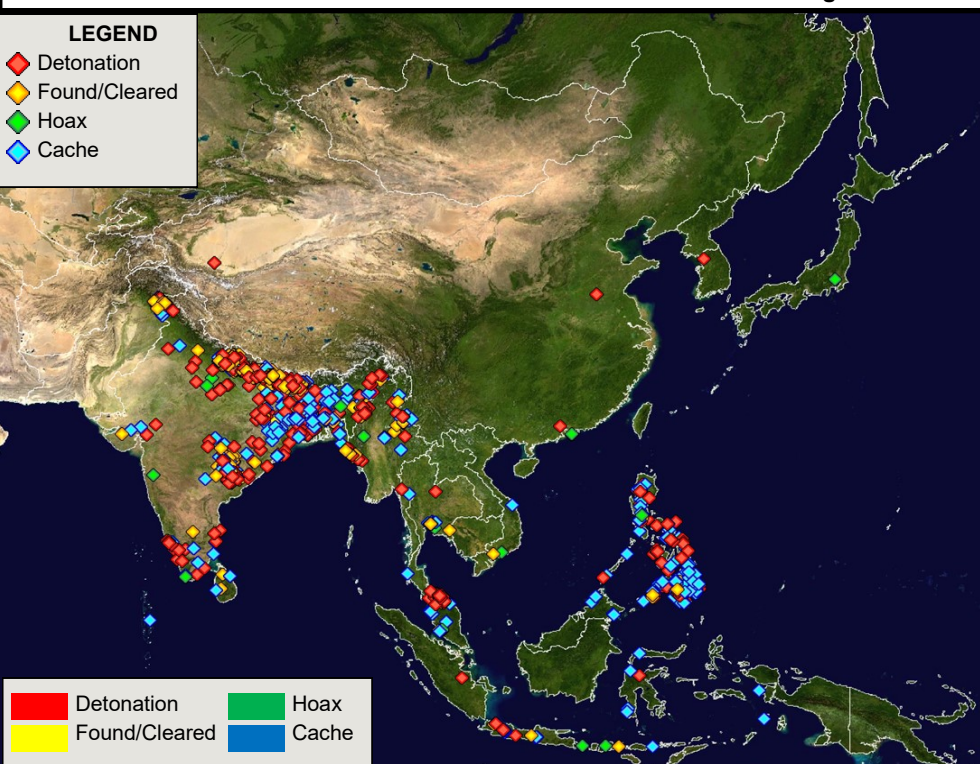
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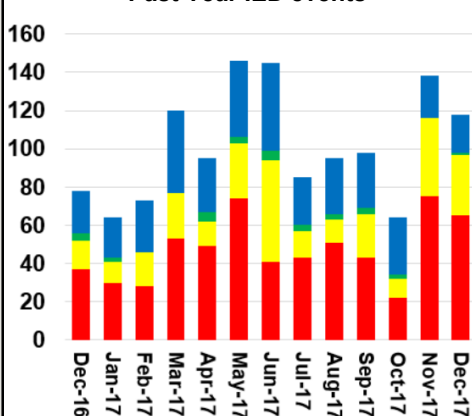
Executive Summary: IED events for the Asia-Pacific region increased almost 20% over the past year, influenced by several key headlines. The Philippines conducted major operations to recover the city of Marawi from pro-ISIS insurgency groups. Burma conducted on-going operations in Rakhine state to counter the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), ultimately causing a humanitarian crisis for Rohingya civilians. Bangladesh contended with pro-ISIS Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen-Bangladesh (JMB) or "Neo-JMB." In Nepal, national and local election violence pushed IED events to record levels.

There were 1241 IED events and 1196 casualties in the Asia-Pacific region in 2017

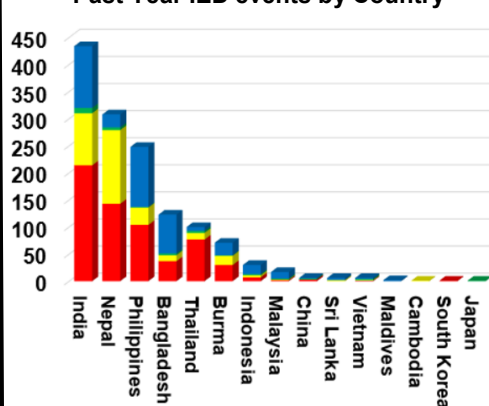


Icons depict events for 2017; heat map depicts event density from December 2016 - December 2017

Past Year IED events



Past Year IED events by Country



[Click on an entry to advance to the associated page.](#)

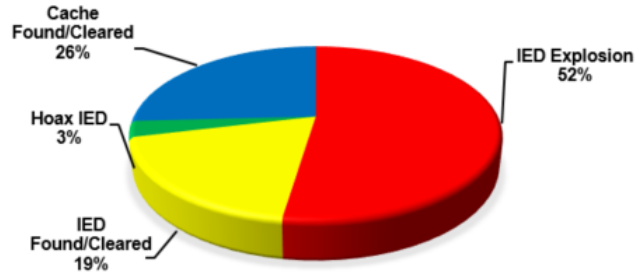
This document is limited to those personnel performing military, intelligence, law enforcement, or security duties in support of C-IED operations.

2010-2017 Data

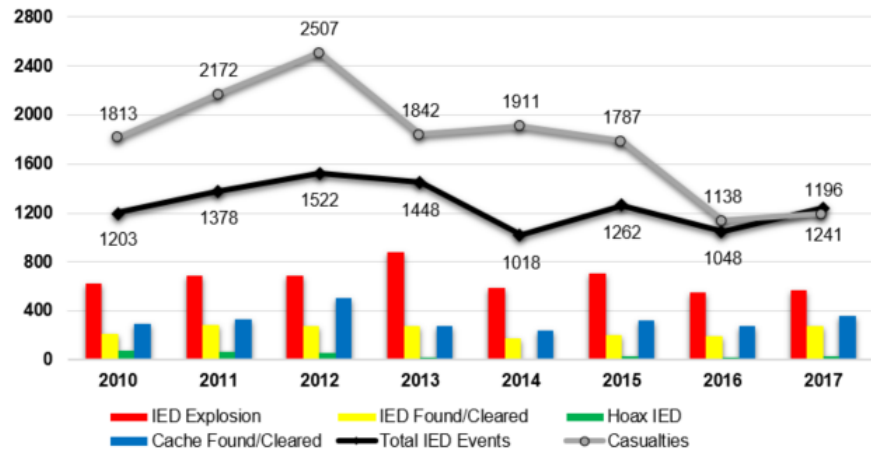
Asia-Pacific IED Data Notes

- Average number of IED events: ~1300
- Average number of IED inflicted casualties: ~1900
 - Civilians WIA category accounts for the highest percentage of casualties (54%)
- Increase in casualties (2010 – 2012) correspond to a global increase in casualties attributed to terrorism (source: Global Terrorism Index)
- Explosives are the primary armament of terrorist organizations globally
- 2010 – 2013 average number of events: ~1400
- 2014 – 2017 average number of events: ~1100

ASIA-PACIFIC IED EVENTS (TYPE) 2010 - 2017



ASIA-PACIFIC IED EVENTS & CASUALTIES 2010 - 2017



POI: Amin Baco

ALIAS: Mohammad Amin Baco; Mohd Amin Baco; Hasan; Abu Jihad; Abu Akmad **POB:** Tawau, Sabah, Malaysia **AGE:** Early-30s **AREA OF OPERATION:** Malaysia; Southern Philippines **AFFILIATIONS:** ISIS-PHL; ASG; Maute Group

Amin Baco is allegedly the new ISIS Southeast Asia (SEA) Emir. According to Muhammad Ilham Syahputra (a captured Indonesian militant linked to the Maute Group) Baco assumed the role of Emir following Isnlon Hapilon's death in October 2017 and is believed to operate in Basilan, Philippines after ISIS-PHL's defeat in Marawi. Baco received training from (now deceased) Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) IED expert Sub-Commander, Zulkifli Bin Hir (alias Marwan). Baco is an expert IED maker, recruiter, and facilitator of terrorists and weapons between Sabah, Malaysia, and the Southern Philippines.



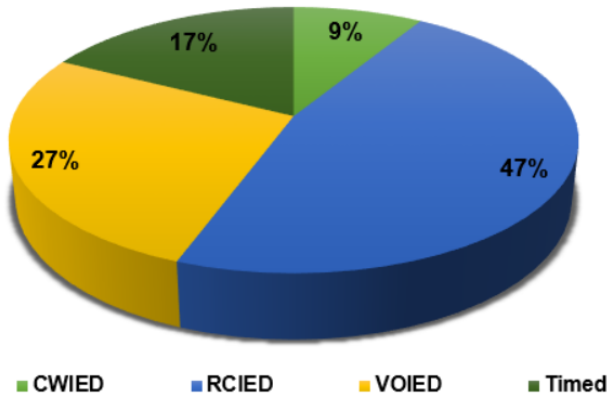
Baco has been an active jihadist since joining the Darul Islam (DI) Sabah network in the mid-1990s. In 1999, DI sent him to fight in Ambon, Indonesia. In 2000, Baco trained in Mangkutana and Pendolo, Indonesia where he established links with JI, Laskar Jundullah, and KOMPAK. It is suspected that Baco has operated in Mindanao since 2006. In 2010, Baco left Malaysia to join the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), where he facilitated the travel of DI members to Mindanao, Philippines for training, as well as to coordinate the purchase of weaponry. Baco is believed to have been one of the architects and key fundraisers of the Marawi Siege.

It is possible surviving militants from the Marawi Siege have claimed Baco as their new leader; however, their claim does not necessarily make him the de facto ISIS SEA Emir. Furthermore, the leadership of ISIS Core has not issued a statement appointing him to the position. Nonetheless, his battlefield leadership, weapons facilitation experience, along with his familial relationships with Hapilon and ASG leader Hatib Sawadjaan make him a strong candidate for the position. Additionally, Baco's connections throughout the tri-border region of Mindanao, Sabah, and Sulawesi also strengthens his chances to lead the organization once headed by Hapilon.

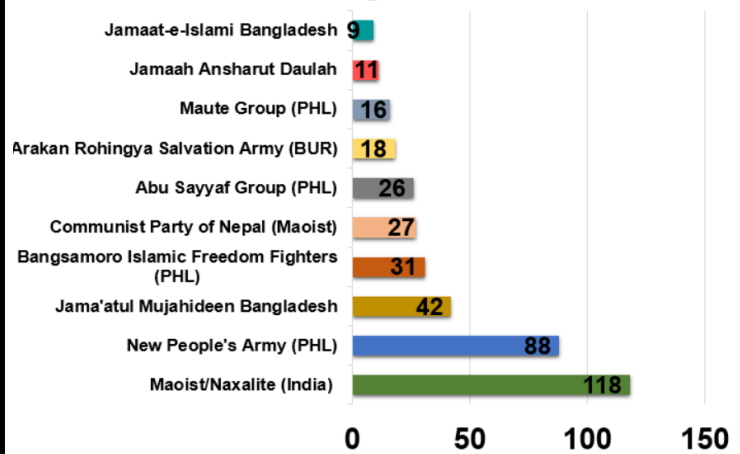
Sources: Philippine Times (11/5/17) Rappler (11/6/17) FMT (11/6/17) FMT (11/9/17) New Straights Times (11/30/17) FMT (11/30/2017) FMT (12/20/17)

IED Activity - Past 12 Months

Switch Type



Group Affiliation



IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics are presumed to be approximations. Graphics represent known switch type and group affiliation.

Emerging Irregular Warfare Trends 2017

NEPAL - First reported RCIED incident incorporating RDX explosives



BANGLADESH - PBIEDs used by militants to avoid capture



BURMA - Tunnels discovered and pipe bombs recovered in Rakhine state



PHILIPPINES - shot down ISIS-PHL Phantom 3 Pro UAS



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Several unique developments affected the 2017 terrorist landscape of the Asia-Pacific. Bangladesh experienced the sustained employment of PBIEDs, which is a historically rarely observed occurrence. Burma contended with expanded insurgent activity in Rakhine, perpetrated by the newly formed Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). Thailand witnessed its lowest level of insurgent-related violence since the revival of the Southern Thai Insurgency (STI) in 2004. Most notably, the Armed Forces of the Philippines battled the compilation of groups that coalesced to form ISIS-Philippines during a five-month offensive to recapture the city of Marawi. The constriction of ISIS's physical caliphate and the potential return of the approximate 1,000 foreign fighters to their countries of origin in the Asia-Pacific could be the most significant variable that may perhaps alter the trajectory of violent extremism in the region in 2018.

South Asia

Bangladesh

Bangladesh experienced a major shift in extremist activity and dynamics in 2017. Following the July 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery attack in Gulshan, Dhaka by ISIS-aligned Neo-Jama'at ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) militants, Bangladeshi security forces cracked down on militant cells throughout the country (**see April 2017 Special Assessment**). Many large-scale operations led to the capture or elimination of most of the senior leaders in the organization, such as Marjan and Sohel Mahfuz. These successes realized by security forces prevented the execution of another major terrorist attack on the scale of Gulshan during 2017.

In 2017, levels of IED activity remained relatively consistent with previous years, though the specific TTPs used by Neo-JMB militants morphed starting in March. Specifically, PBIEDs in the form of suicide belts became a commonly used TTP; in total, there were 29 PBIED events from March to December. Likewise, the explosive main charge evolved from primarily black powder to TATP. Several caches recovered over the year indicated the likely manufacture of TATP from precursor chemicals, and it was also discovered in unexploded PBIEDs recovered from raid sites. The use of PBIEDs by Neo-JMB militants was also unusual, as they were used as a primarily defensive weapon to avoid capture. There were several incidents of militants gathering family members together and detonating suicide belts before they could be arrested by the security forces, which highlight this tactic.

Overall, the government's stance against militancy improved in 2017, as perceptions of the threat shifted from addressing isolated cases of militancy to engaging the entire network of Neo-JMB, from the highest to the lowest levels. Like the Philippines, Bangladesh was targeted by ISIS Core as a location with a sufficient militant power base and an established infrastructure to conduct on-going operations. Likewise, Bangladeshi and Philippine security forces fought hard-won battles to prevent ISIS from gaining too much momentum. Though the battle to defend Bangladesh against ISIS (not to mention the somewhat dormant AQ-backed Ansar al-Islam) influence is likely far from over, 2017 definitely proved that Bangladeshi security forces' operational capabilities have greatly increased over the last year. In 2018, though greatly weakened, Neo-JMB will likely continue to attempt to conduct operations. As ISIS Core (and the material support it provides) continues to disintegrate, this may present a possible opportunity for the resurgence of AQ-backed militants. **SATP JMB Counter-Extremism Project Reuters (1/5/17) Indian Defence Review (4/6/17) Dhaka Tribune (4/22/17) Diplomat (7/1/17) Daily Star (7/23/17) Dhaka Tribune (9/6/17) Small Wars Journal (11/6/17) Daily Star (12/31/17)**

India

India in 2017 was a story of mixed progress. While India continued to make gains in pacifying the northeastern insurgencies and was able to fend off any meaningful growth in the influence of ISIS and AQ, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir continued to deteriorate and the Maoist movement appeared to become more lethal despite a decline in activity and support. Maoist violence increased in the later part of the year, putting India in a precarious security position going into 2018.

In early 2016, Indian-Pakistani relations soured following a fidayeen attack on a military base in Pathankot, Punjab, which led to a steady increase of Pakistani ceasefire violations and militant activity throughout the year, culminating in the September 2016 Uri attack by suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militants. Ultimately in 2017, Pakistan ceasefire violations—a barometer for Indo-Pak relations—would climb to over 880 incidents: the highest in seven years and nearly double the amount from 2016. Likewise, both civilian agitation such as stone

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throwing, and militant attacks increased substantially in 2017 and also became more dangerous, on average. In early 2017, the Jammu and Kashmir government cautioned security forces that protesters appeared to be building “acid bombs,” which could be used alongside stone pelting and petrol bombs (Molotov cocktails). On the militant side, IED use remained fairly rare, but the number of grenades and major fidayeen attacks increased sharply in 2017. Despite the low number of IED incidents, the first-time appearance of suicide IEDs recovered from caches or infiltration encounter sites in mid- and late-2017 and attempts to target high-profile religious targets such as the Buddha Amarnath yatra pilgrimage underscores the seriousness of the current conflict and likely foreshadows a more dangerous Jammu and Kashmir in 2018.



Civilians throwing rocks at Indian forces in Jammu-Kashmir

In Jammu and Kashmir, AQ in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and ISIS started making explicit appeals to the Kashmiri populace, enticing them to fight for sharia and the caliphate. This appeal was soundly rejected and countered by the native Kashmiri militant groups, which used the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (their coordinating body) to declare that neither ISIS nor AQIS has any place in Jammu and Kashmir and by stating that the struggle for Kashmiri freedom and Islamic terrorism are wholly separate issues. Consequently, ISIS appears—at least for now—to have settled on a strategy for India that mirrors its activities in Europe: radicalizing lone wolf attackers and small groups via the internet and encouraging them to conduct attacks with their own resources. ISIS was able to claim its first attack in India in the form of an IED on the Bhopal-Ujjain express train, which resulted in 10 wounded. Of

note, ISIS claimed responsibility for a small arms attack that resulted in one police officer and one militant killed in Kashmir, but police and militant groups were both quick to say that the claim was propaganda by ISIS to create a false impression of influence that they do not possess. Given these events, it seems likely that AQIS and ISIS will remain small factors in the Indian security landscape in the near term.

In the Red Corridor, India announced there were 851 incidents of violence committed by the Communist Party of India – Maoist (now referred to as Left-Wing Extremism, or LWE, by the Indian Government) as of December 15: a decline of 53% from its peak in 2009 (down 21% from the previous year and the first time there had been under 1,000 incidents since 2001). Indian officials attributed this to increasing security coverage in traditional Maoist strongholds and a growing disillusionment from the population with the Maoist movement leading to a reduction in recruitment for the group. Indian officials also acknowledged, however, that Maoists could be intentionally keeping a low profile, suggesting they were not confident in their assessment. While this was undoubtedly a victory and a milestone for the Indian government, the data also indicated that fatalities among Indian security forces increased by nearly 20%, suggesting that the Maoists had become substantially more lethal. This increased attack effectiveness is partly attributed to the likely experimentation and refinement of Maoist tactics, especially with IEDs, which saw the introduction of explosive-tipped arrows and an increase in the use of pressure-activated IED switches. The Indian assessment also did not make mention of significant monsoon flooding that occurred in the summer months in the most active areas of the “red corridor,” which may have also led to the decline in activity. The recession of flood waters in this region facilitated an increase in activity in the latter part of the year, which included some of the Maoist’s most lethal months. While progress against Left Wing Extremism is expected to continue in 2018, 2017 may be the year Maoist started fighting their decline.

In India’s northeast, 2017 was a pivotal year for the local insurgencies. India made substantial progress with the Nationalist Council of Nagaland – Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) faction, to the point that they openly sided with the government following attacks by other factions, which was quite a reversal from the round of talks that occurred earlier in the year. Learning about the progress, Khaplang’s faction of the NSCN (NSCN-K), based in Burma, started agitating and increasing its activity in the region to make the point that there would be no peace if the NSCN-K was not at the table. In mid-2017, Khaplang died and leadership of the NSCN-K, and later leadership of the United Liberation front of Western Southeast Asia, transferred to his vice-president Khango Konyak. The implications of this leadership handover have not made themselves apparent yet, given Konyak’s reported opposition to the talks.

The effects of 2017 will likely play out in 2018. Though India is already signaling its belief that the northeastern insurgencies are quelled, areas such as Manipur experienced increases in militant activity. Notwithstanding this violence, peace seems increasingly likely among a few of the major factions. **Times of India (12/3/17) Indian Express (12/19/17) Hindustan Times (6/11/17) Rising Kashmir (9/26/17) The Quint (10/7/17) Long War Journal (6/26/17) Hindustan Times (7/28/17) Kashmir Reader (7/19/17) Indian Express (3/9/17) Indian Express**

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(11/19/17) The Hindu (12/31/17) Firstpost (11/4/17) Hindustan Times (11/7/17) Daily Pioneer (8/30/17) Firstpost (7/19/17) Indian Express (8/19/17) Times of India (8/25/17) Firstpost (3/15/17) Times of India (12/26/17) Nagaland Post (7/19/17) The Wire (10/22/17) Hindustan Times (10/23/17) ePao (11/15/17) Firstpost (7/11/17) Times of India (10/19/17) Economic Times (6/12/17) News Click (12/12/17)

Nepal

In Nepal, 2017 was a year characterized by change. The government successfully conducted three phases of local elections and two phases of national elections, which was a significant step forward towards the fulfillment of promises made to the people and a demonstration of commitment to the constitution. Agitating ethnic minority groups initially refused to participate in the election process, but did eventually opt to cooperate as the government was willing to work through issues with the majority of political and ethnic groups. Some of the more extreme factions, however, continued to commit IED and other violent attacks. Militants from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (CPN(M)) and its offshoot, Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha-Revolutionary (JTMM-R), sought to derail the election process and to stoke ethnic tensions through violent action.



14 MAY - Nepalese civilians cast their votes

Throughout the first several months of the year, agitating ethnic minority groups refused to participate in the election process unless the government amended the constitution to meet their demands. Several factors ultimately created conditions conducive to the participation of ethnic minority political parties. The first of these was the splitting of local elections into three phases, allowing the government additional time to work through the demands of agitating groups. The second was the decision by ethnic minority political leaders to commit to the election process by consolidating their parties into a single political party and by participating in elections. Third, the government made significant steps towards accountability for war crimes and human rights abuses during the civil war. This includes the conviction of three Nepal Army officers for the murder of a 15-year old girl in April 2017. Fourth, in August 2017 the government added more local level elections; while this did not completely satisfy the agitating groups, it did show that the government was willing to compromise. Lastly, the government accepted the agitating ethnic groups' movement as legitimate political activity and subsequently dropped charges against them. Thus, through compromise and dedication to political and social progress, Nepal was able to fulfill its constitutional mandate.

Election related IED violence spiked before and during each of the election days, rising to the highest levels since the end of the civil war in 2006. Though most of the IEDs were unsophisticated (e.g. impact detonated devices, such as socket, or small pipe bombs), authorities did recover a pressure cooker RCIED that incorporated RDX explosives; it is the most advanced IED discovered in Nepal (see November 2017 monthly). IED casualties also spiked, with civilians comprising the majority of those killed or wounded. Despite the months of increased violence in 2017, it is highly likely that IED activity will drop to historical norms in 2018. When attacks do occur, they will likely be committed by elements of the CPN(M) and JTMM-R. **SATP Nepal Monitor Kathmandu Post (4/20/17) Kathmandu Post (8/11/17)**

Maldives

Maldives experienced an upswing in extremist activity in 2017 (see **November 2017 Special Assessment**), likely due in part to increasing political and social conservatism. IED events in the Maldives are very rare, with the last major attack occurring in 2007. However, in 2017, there were two incidents of IED activity; both were IED caches recovered from Islamic militants suspected of planning attacks in Malé. Another indicator of increasing extremist activity was the murder of liberal blogger and journalist Yameen Rasheed in April 2017. Following his death, social media accounts connected to Islamic extremists in the Maldives praised the attack and called for further action against atheists and journalists.

The government appears to be supporting this increasing conservatism. For instance, in December 2017, President Yameen cautioned against a weakening of Islamic values and also stated that Islam is the only permitted religion. These statements could be interpreted as tacit government approval for activity against groups or individuals that are perceived to oppose Islam. In the coming year, it is highly likely that extremist activity will contin-

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ue to increase in the Maldives, which could correspond to an increase use of IEDs. **Maldives Murders (2017)**
Mihaaru (4/27/17) MI (5/10/17) Mihaaru (9/6/17) MI (11/15/17) MI (12/20/17) MI (12/29/17)

Southeast Asia

Philippines

In 2017, the Philippines experienced a challenging security landscape as they tackled the hostile takeover of a major city in the southern Philippines, terminated the peace process with their communist insurgency, and combatted maritime kidnapping operations.

The most significant event was the Marawi Siege: a battle between local pro-ISIS militants and Philippine security forces over control of the city. The conflict led President Duterte to declare martial law on Mindanao, which was supposed to lapse at the end of 2017, but was recently extended until the end of 2018. Although most of the conflict was fought by Philippine Special Operations Forces, with enabling support from the United States and Australia, the urban battle necessitated participation by counterterrorism resources from all over the country, as there was political pressure to resolve the conflict as quickly as possible.



Philippine Marines conduct clearing operations in Marawi City

The hostile takeover of a city was ISIS-Philippines' (ISIS-PHL) most bold operation to date. It was also a tactical failure. Though it provided ISIS Core with limited strategic success through the execution of an impressive media campaign that highlighted the Marawi jihadists, it will most likely prove to be a strategic failure for ISIS-PHL. Over the course of the five-month conflict, 974 ISIS-PHL combatants were killed, including nearly all of the group's leaders. The few that survived or departed the city before the onset of hostilities are reported to be recruiting and reorganizing for their next "Marawi;" however, it is likely that such an operation will not occur in the near term, as ISIS-PHL requires extensive time to reconstitute its forces.

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) began the first half of the year with a focus on maritime kidnappings, as they did the prior year. Mid-year, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia initiated joint maritime patrols, which had a measurable impact. Due to the patrols, ASG's maritime operations declined by the second half of the year and they confined their kidnapping operations to Philippine waters and territories. In April, a group of ASG militants traveled to the resort island of Bohol to conduct such kidnapping operations, but they were interdicted by security forces who received early warning of the kidnapping plot. The clash resulted in the death of Abu Rami, the leader of a prominent ASG Kidnapping-For-Ransom (KFR) ring, along with five of his subordinates. Throughout the year, the Philippine Army conducted over fifty operations against the ASG, which resulted in 144 ASG surrenders, 128 killed, and 80 arrested.

The Communist Party of Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) and the government began the year under a ceasefire from the previous year; however, the six-month armistice ended in February due to the NPA's continued "tax collection" activities. Throughout the year, the NPA continued to execute their usual attacks against government forces, police, and civilians. Backchannel talks almost resulted in a renewed truce; however an incident in which an infant was killed during an NPA ambush towards the end of the year pushed Duterte to formally cancel all talks and to declare the CPP-NPA a terrorist organization.

In the coming year, a decrease in ISIS-aligned activity in the Philippines may be realized, even though pro-ISIS groups are regrouping and reconstituting their forces following the attrition suffered in Marawi. Now that the ISIS-aligned parts of the ASG and the Maute Group are recovering from their losses, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) is seen to be reasserting its role as the ISIS flag bearer. The MILF is patiently adhering to a peace treaty while waiting for the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) to pass, which will grant self-rule in Muslim areas in Mindanao. If the President does not deliver on this commitment, it could prompt factions from the MILF to defect to the BIFF and other pro-ISIS groups. **Benar News (9/27/17) The Philippine Star (11/20/17) The Diplomat (12/5/17) Benar News (12/21/17) The Manila Times (12/31/17) Rappler (12/27/17) Rappler (5/7/17) New Straits Times (12/28/17) DW (12/28/17)**

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Thailand

In 2017, Thailand experienced the lowest IED activity since the revival of the Southern Thai Insurgency (STI) in 2004. Several contributing factors to the reduction of IED activity include the severe flooding that occurred in December 2016 into January 2017, the ban on cooking gas cylinders in the south, as well as increased border operations by Thai and Malaysian security forces. Overall, the death toll this year from the Southern Thai Insurgency has been the lowest since the conflict began 13 years ago; approximately 235 people died in 2017 from IED attacks, compared to the 309 in 2016 (casualty figures peaked in 2007 with 892 killed). The Deep South Watch (an organization based at Prince of Songkla University Pattani campus in southern Thailand) that monitors the STI conflict, concluded that this reduction is likely linked to the ongoing peace talks between the Thai government and MARA Pattani, the umbrella organization for separatist groups.



First responders following the Big-C Supercenter attack

April 2017 witnessed a spike in IED activity (55 events), likely due to the Barisan Revolusi Nasional's (BRN) negative response to the Thai government's rejection of their conditions for peace talks. Another event that likely caused the spike in violence was the new military-backed constitution signed into law by the new Thai King, which limits power of elected officials and increases the army's role in the government. The attacks in May yielded the most injuries in 2017 due to the double IED attack on the Big-C Supercenter resulting in approximately 80 wounded.

Throughout the year, the most common TTPs used by the insurgency were arson events to distract or draw police and security forces from their outposts into an engagement or to target them with IEDs, as well as the use of road blockades such as downed trees or scattering nail spikes. These commonly used TTPs aid the attackers' escape and add complexity to both IED and small arms fire events.

IED events could potentially escalate in 2018. The Thai King's signing of the military-backed constitution will continue to solidify the power of the military. As such, extremist elements may feel further threatened and resort to increasing the scale of IED activity as a defensive measure. Additionally, the general elections scheduled for November 2018 will provide an opportune time, as well as prime targets, for IED attacks designed to create a perception of insecurity. The diverted attention to the political unrest in the capital and the peace talk stalemate will likely prompt STI militants to increase IED attacks on security and Army patrols. **Pattaya Mail (1/27/17) Bangkok Post (1/29/17) Malay Mail (4/10/17) Bangkok Post (12/17/17) The Indian Express (12/23/17) The Straits Times (12/27/17)**

Burma

In the past year, Burma experienced increasing turmoil associated to the conflict between the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA, formerly Harakat al-Yaqin) and the Burmese Army (Tatmadaw) in the Rakhine State. Starting with the October 2016 attack by ARSA militants on border patrol posts near Bangladesh, the Rakhine State became increasingly destabilized and dangerous. The Tatmadaw began a brutal crackdown on both the ARSA militants and Rohingya civilians, causing several hundred thousand Rohingya to flee across the river into Bangladesh. Bangladeshi authorities expressed growing concern as the refugee crisis began to impact the areas around Cox's Bazar and Chittagong, ultimately causing them to appeal to the United Nations for increased assistance. International outcry against the government of Burma reached a fevered pitch as the Rohingya refugees began to tell their stories about atrocities committed by the Tatmadaw, to include rape, torture, and destruction of property. A 3 FEB report by the United Nations Human Rights Commission stated that the treatment of Rohingya civilians by the Tatmadaw could constitute crimes against humanity, which the Burmese government vehemently contested.

On 24 AUG, the former head of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, called on Burma to end its persecution of the Rohingya. The following day, ARSA militants conducted coordinated attacks on police posts and executed an attempted raid on a Tatmadaw base; 77 suspected militants and 12 security forces died in the attack. These events incorporated IEDs, small arms, and crude weapons (such as wooden spears).

Specific IED TTPs seen in Burma include the use of radio-control technology, chemicals (such as urea and po-

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tassium chlorate), and enhancements (such as ball bearings). Metal pipes are the container most often utilized in IED construction. Additionally, tunnels used by militants were discovered several times in 2017 and seemed to be used for training and living spaces.

Throughout the rest of 2017, the Burmese government blamed many events of violence occurring in Rakhine on ARSA (such as the murder of 28 Hindus and the destruction of 30 villages in North Rakhine) and attempted to find links between ARSA and international terrorist organizations. Meanwhile, Bangladesh worked with Burma and international organizations to contend with the influx of Rohingya refugees, which included efforts to provide them with basic services, to biometrically enroll them, and plans to repatriate them to Burma. In 2018, ARSA activity is likely to continue, as their primary complaints with the Burmese government have gone unaddressed. **UN (2/3/17) al Jazeera (8/24/17) BBC (9/6/17) Daily Star (9/11/17) BBC (10/11/17) Dhaka Tribune (10/21/17) al Jazeera (11/30/17)**

Indonesia

Indonesia experienced a slight decline in terrorist incidents in 2017. A major factor contributing to the decrease in attacks was the weakening of Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), whose leader was killed in July of 2016. As of December 2017, Indonesian security forces believe there are fewer than nine MIT militants left.



Indonesian EOD responding to the suicide attack in Jakarta

Continuing a trend from 2016, Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), the largest Indonesian pro-ISIS group, continued to dominate Indonesia's terrorism landscape in 2017. The 21 MAY twin suicide bombing near Jakarta was conducted by JAD militants. It was also the deadliest attack of 2017, killing three police officers and wounding 11 others. The devices employed reportedly used TATP main charges, possibly indicating that Indonesian terrorists have discovered a way to prevent the usually highly sensitive explosive from prematurely detonating. Additionally, the bombers demonstrated somewhat sophisticated tactics, as they coordinated the detonation of their devices to occur in five-minute increments. This approach was likely designed to yield a maximum number of casualties in a crowded venue.

One key difference from 2016 was the effect the Marawi Siege had on Indonesian terrorism. The wide-scale attention Marawi received from ISIS Core prompted JAD's leader, Aman Abdurrahman, to send dozens of his fighters to the Philippines to fight alongside their Filipino pro-ISIS brothers. But with ISIS

-PHL in Marawi now defeated, and the remnants in disarray, pro-ISIS Indonesians are likely to return to Indonesia.

Going into 2018, JAD will likely remain the most active VEO in Indonesia. Further attacks targeting police officers through bombings, shootings, and stabbing tactics are likely. These attacks are likely to occur in Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara, which are traditional hotbeds for terrorist activity. One major uncertainty that could aggravate the Indonesian jihadist landscape in 2018 involves the rapidly disappearing ISIS Caliphate in Syria. Many prominent Indonesian jihadists, such as Bahrumsyah and Bahrn Naim, have made their reputation in Syria. Should those individuals be able to escape Syria and return, it would certainly have a significant impact on terrorism in Indonesia. **Tempo (5/28/17) Jakarta Post (5/26/17) Jakarta Post (5/28/17) News.com.au (5/25/17)**

Malaysia

Malaysia experienced no reported terrorist attacks in 2017 (there was one recorded attack in 2016).

Malaysia's Special Branch Police have demonstrated an impressive capability to penetrate human and social networks to disrupt terrorist plots. In 2017, the Special Branch, in conjunction with other security force elements, interdicted several pro-ISIS plots, including one that prevented the bombing of a beer festival in Kuala Lumpur in October. Like Indonesia, there is some uncertainty about what could happen to the terrorist environment in Malaysia as many of the Malaysians who fought in Syria return. Barring the threats manifested by returning foreign fighters, in 2018 the primary IED threat in Malaysia will continue to remain criminals employing black-powder pipe bombs to access ATM machines. **Benar News (12/28/17) (See Incident Highlight for the OCT 17 Monthly)**

Asia-Pacific Region End of Year Review

Northeast Asia

China

China experienced a drop in Uyghur-related terrorism between 2016 and 2017 in the Xinjiang region, the ancestral homeland of the Uyghurs. Beijing's implementation of heavy-handed policies towards civilians over the past year (such as restrictions on Uyghur religious practices, destruction of mosques, arrests of local leaders, the confiscation of all Uyghur passports, and forcing them to submit to biometric data collection) may have made it more difficult for insurgents to operate within Xinjiang. Simultaneously, these actions continue to foment discord in the region. While the latest drop in terrorist activities is a step forward in stabilizing the tense relationship between Beijing and Xinjiang, Uyghur jihadists working beyond China's borders have expanded their military capabilities and are now closely engaging with AQ, ISIS, and other terrorist groups across the Middle East and Turkey.

In 2017, Uyghur militants remained a target for recruitment by ISIS. A video published on 27 FEB specifically targets China. In the video, an Uyghur member threatens to "flood the motherland with rivers of blood." Moreover, heavily armed Uyghur children are used as part of the video's propaganda, which includes a scene where the children execute a Chinese hostage.

This past year the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), a VEO consisting mostly of Uyghur extremists fighting for the establishment of an Islamic state in Xinjiang, successfully launched an attack on the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan in August 2017 using a suicide VBIED. This attack underscores the serious threat this group poses to China. The attack involved coordination between multiple, local VEOs in Kyrgyzstan and demonstrated the TIP's ability to operate through cells across Central Asia and the Middle East.

Unlike previous years, 2017 did not see any indications of Uyghur militants operating in Southeast Asia, which is partly due to the TIP's and the al-Nusra Front's interest in primarily recruiting Uyghur fighters for their activities in the Middle East. **CFR (9/4/14) Free Malaysia Today (11/24/16) Newsweek (3/2/17) CNN (12/2/17)**

Marawi IED TTPs



Pro-ISIS elements widely employed IEDs during the conflict in Marawi. Although no significant new IED TTPs were deployed at scale, IEDs were effective at delaying the progress made by Philippine security forces and were often cited as the primary reason for the slow advancement made by the Armed Forces of the Philippines during the five-month siege. The following highlights IED TTPs employed during the battle for Marawi:



SWITCHES: ISIS-PHL relied heavily upon victim-operated and command wire switches. The heavy use of CWIEDs, and the limited use of RCIEDs, is atypical of the IED TTPs of the group; nonetheless, this is a likely response to fighting in a dense urban environment. The victim-operated switches involved pressure switches made from alcohol bottles and loop switches from strands of wire. At times, the loop switches were initiated as command-pull. Radio-controlled switches primarily involved the use of two-way radios, as cell service was degraded soon after the initiation of the conflict.

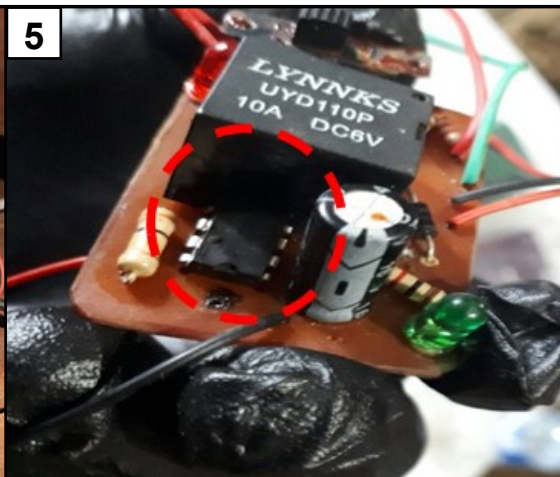


POWER: The power sources for devices typically came from nine-volt batteries and 12-volt motorcycle batteries. The motorcycle batteries were reportedly used with command wire devices.

CHARGES: Main charges primarily consisted of flash powder or cast TNT that was taken from UXOs. The militants reportedly gave the job of repurposing cast TNT to their hostages.

CONTAINERS: ISIS-PHL primarily used two types of containers for their devices: UXOs and repurposed plastic bottles from everyday items such as local soy sauce bottles, frozen yogurt bottles, and even Johnson's Baby Powder as depicted in picture 3.

ENHANCEMENTS: Enhancements involved the use of common nails and Philippine coins. Although the use of coins is somewhat of a new development, they were likely employed due to the expenditure and unavailability of more effective enhancement items.

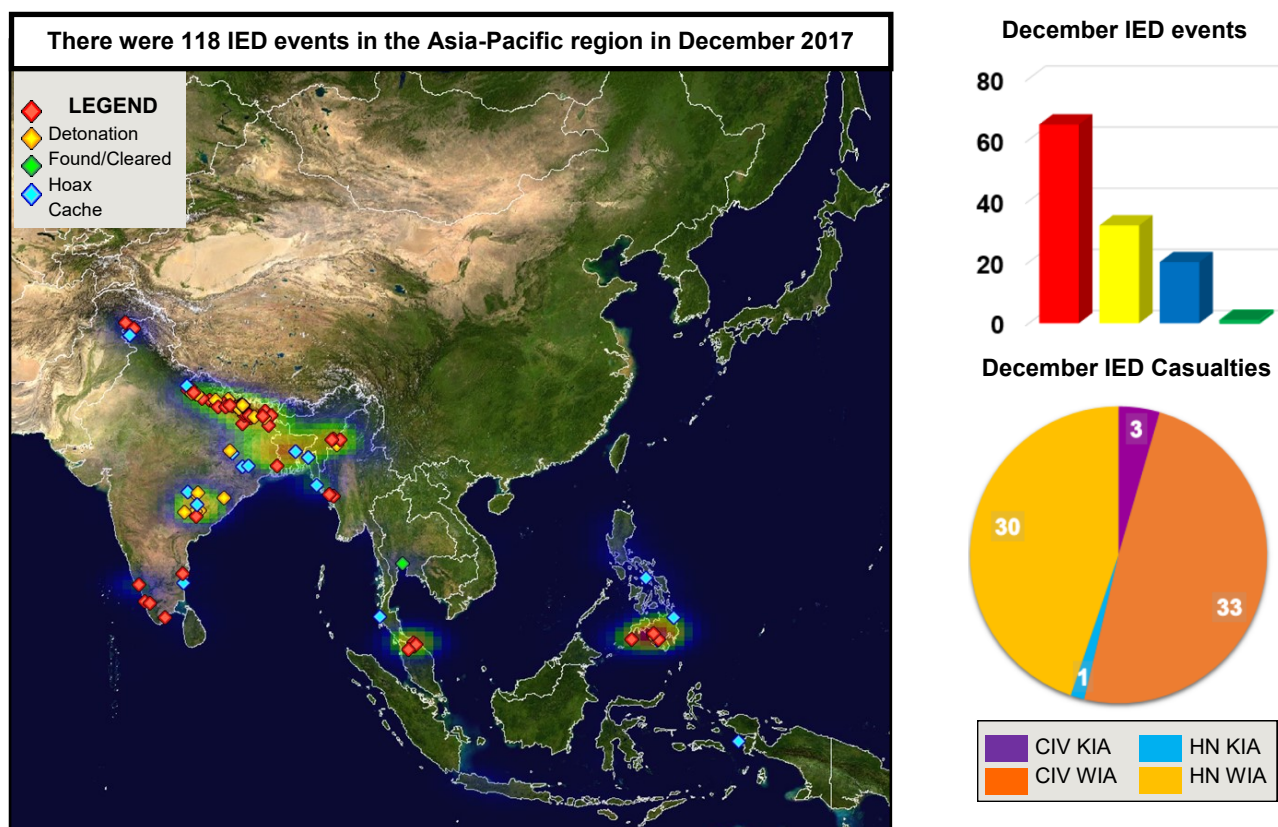


Though not exhaustive, the pictures depict a variety of IED recoveries from the Marawi conflict.

1) Pressure Switch 2) Loop Switch 3) Improvised Grenade 4) Baofeng (RC) Switch 5) 555 Timer circuit

Source: Philippine Army EOD Battalion

December Asia-Pacific IED Events



IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics are presumed to be approximations.

December Executive Summary

In December, IED activity across the Asia-Pacific region decreased by 14% from November and there was a 40% drop in IED-related casualties. In South Asia, IED activity also decreased by 14% from last month and there were nearly five-times fewer IED-related casualties. In Southeast Asia, IED activity decreased by 17% from November; however, IED-related casualties more than doubled. There were no reported IED events in Northeast Asia this month.

In South Asia, IED activity decreased from 114 events in November to 98 events in December. IED-related casualties also decreased, from 89 casualties in November to 18 casualties in December. In Bangladesh, there was one reported IED event and no IED-related casualties ([see pg. 14](#)). In India, IED activity slightly increased from November (up 16%), and there was a dramatic drop in IED-related casualties (39 casualties in November compared to 6 casualties in December) ([see pg. 15](#)). In Nepal, political violence stemming from regional elections resulted in two consecutive months of elevated IED activity. While IED rates were higher than normal, there were fewer IED events and IED-related casualties than the previous month ([see pg. 16](#)).

In Southeast Asia, IED activity decreased from 24 events in November to 20 events in December. Despite this decrease, IED-related casualties more than doubled from last month (23 casualties in November compared to 49 casualties in December). In the Philippines, IED events decreased by 40% from November, however, IED-related casualties were nearly four-times higher this month ([see pg. 18](#)). In Thailand, IED activity remained the same as the previous month, and there was a slight drop in IED-related casualties ([see pg. 19](#)).

South Asia: December Significant Activity

Bangladesh

West Bengal Security forces conducted raids in four districts and arrested more than 70 suspects involved in the production of counterfeit Indian passports for Bangladeshi terrorists. The raid was conducted based upon the interrogation of four Bangladesh nationals arrested at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport.

New India Express (12/15/17)

India

In early December, official sources told Excelsior media that the Jammu and Kashmir Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) could possibly close by 2020 due to a lack of trained personnel. One official stated that "There is absolutely no focus on filling the posts lying vacant every year, but the FSL is being filled with non-technical police to give the impression that there is no dearth of manpower." These vacancies include a lack of an explosive expert since 2012 and a fingerprint expert since 2014. For some time, material has been sent to the Srinagar unit for analysis, which causes delays in the investigation and prosecution processes. **Daily Excelsior (12/8/17)**

In early December, the contents of an article from the Urdu version of the ISIS magazine *Rumiyah* 10 were translated and posted in a Kashmir centric pro-ISIS Telegram group called "Al Qaraar." The article called for Kashmiri Muslims to "disavow democracy and pledge allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr." The article also asks Kashmiri Muslims to not be fooled by the "spies from RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) or ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence);" the two external intelligence agencies in India and Pakistan respectively. Furthermore, the *Rumiyah* article instructs the readers that they should "kill them everywhere; even if their names resemble those of Muslims, they are apostates and have left the religion of Allah." **The Times of India (12/12/17)**

On 24 DEC, Balangir police interdicted an explosive smuggling operation in the district when two vehicles carrying a large amount of explosives and detonators was seized and linked to a manufacturing unit in Ostapal. Sources reported that four or five illegal manufacturing units operate in this area and that several illegal stone quarries in and around these areas use these explosives. This suggests that although security forces have cracked down on the illegal explosives market, trade in this commodity is still occurring in the Red Corridor. **The New Indian Express (12/24/17)**

In late December, the Central Reserve Police Force's (CPRF) Institute of IED management released a finding that Maoists have started to use pressure-activated VOIEDs. According to one senior CPRF officer, "In the past five years, the Maoists were not known for using pressure IEDs. They used to rely on Command Wire Mechanism IED systems. However, the security forces had devised an effective mechanism to identify the CWM IEDs and foil the attacks." In recent months, as many as 10 VOIEDs detonated or were discovered in areas where typically Maoists are known to utilize Command Wire IEDs (CWIED). **Times of India (12/26/17)**

Nepal

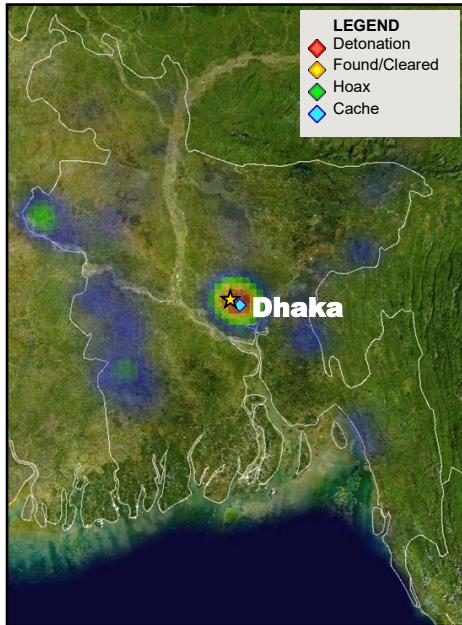
On 5 DEC, ahead of the National Elections, Nepal closed its border with India at 22 entry points for 72 hours. The government of Nepal decided to close the border following meetings between Indian and Nepalese security officials. Nepalese security forces also increased their defensive posture at polling sites in an attempt to protect voters. **Kathmandu Post (12/5/17) Hindustan Times (12/5/17)**

Maldives

In mid-December, a Maldivian fighting for the al-Qa'ida affiliated Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly al-Nusra Front) was killed near the Israel border in Beit Jinn, Syria. The media wing for Maldivian fighters in Syria, Bilad al-Sham, also reported that two other Maldivians were killed in Hama, Syria. There are approximately 50 to 250 Maldivians fighting in Syria and the deaths reported in December bring the total number killed to at least six. **Mihaaru (12/24/17) Maldives Independent (12/25/17)**

On 29 DEC, the Islamic Ministry of the Maldives released a statement declaring that there can be only one religion in the Maldives and encouraged intolerance of other religions. The statement came after a human rights advocate, Shahindha Ismail, tweeted that "Allah allowed for other faiths" in response to a recent statement by President Yameen that he would not permit any religion but Islam to be practiced in the Maldives. Maldivian police are now investigating Shahindha Ismail, though it is unclear on what grounds. **Maldives Independent (12/29/17)**

Bangladesh: December IED Events

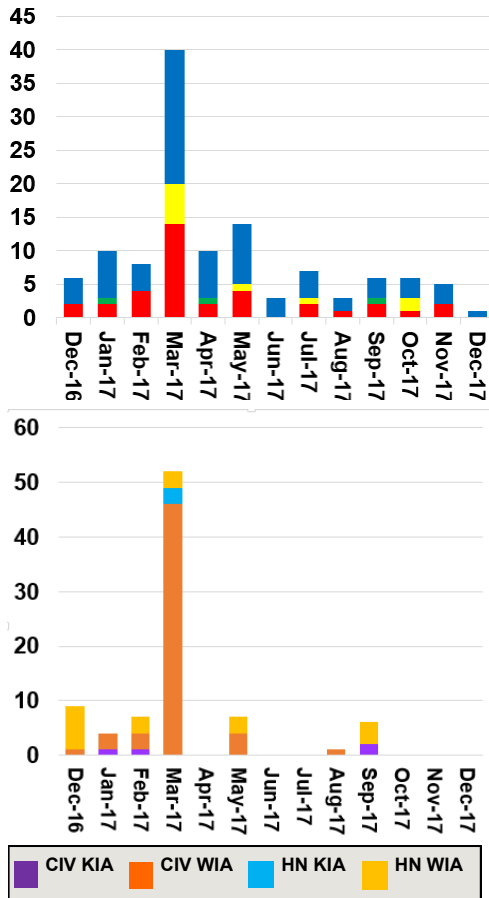


There was one IED cache event.

On 14 DEC, police recovered an IED cache in Dhaka following the arrest of Abdus Samad, a founder of the Neo-JMB, along with other unidentified Neo-JMB members. The cache contained approximately 200 detonators. **Daily Star (12/15/17)**

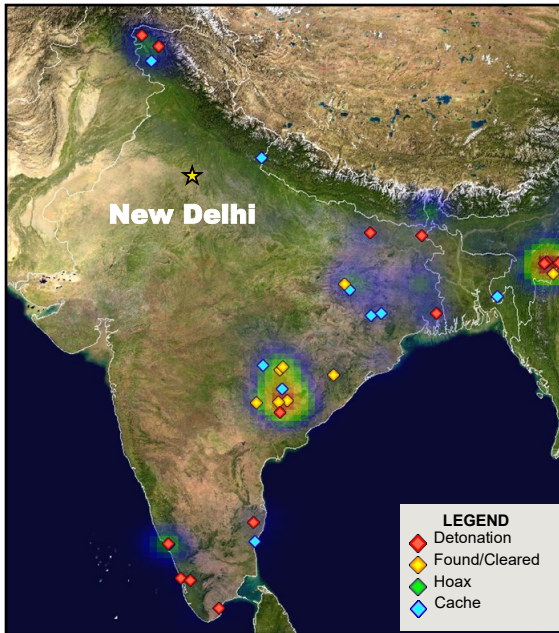
December IED activity was relatively low following a series of arrests and cache discoveries. The arrest of Abdus Samad and the information gleaned from the interrogation of Kohinur Rahman tempered IED production. Acting on this information, security forces raided safe houses and recovered detonators and crude bombs, reducing IED component supplies in the short term.

Past Year IED Events by Type



IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics should be considered approximations.

India: December IED Events



There were 15 IED detonation events, 12 IED found and cleared events, and 10 IED cache events.

On 2 DEC, Champawat Police recovered an IED cache in Champawat, Uttarakhand. The cache was found during a routine patrol and, according to police, the cache was staged for smuggling and intended for use in election violence occurring across the border in Kanchanpur, Nepal. The cache contained an unspecified amount of explosives, batteries, and detonators. **Times of India (12/4/17)**

On 5 DEC, Bhupalpally Police found and cleared an IED in Vijayapuri Colony, Jayashankar Bhupalpally mandal, Telangana. The device was described as a pressure-activated VOIED, which was emplaced in conjunction with a Maoist poster and surrounded by stones and mud. Police said the device was emplaced as part of the People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) week. **New Indian Express (12/5/17)**

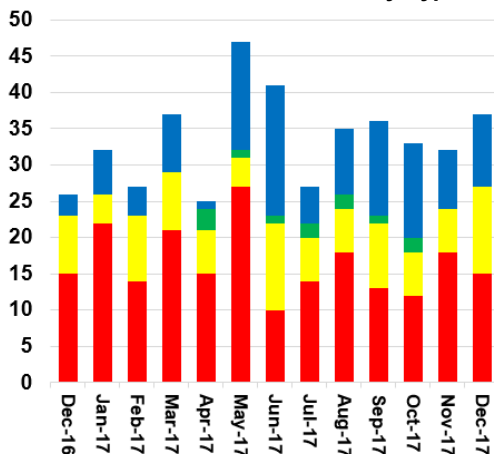
On 6 DEC, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) recovered an IED cache in Kumari jungle, Gumla, Jharkhand. The cache contained explosives, and 28 pressure cookers, suspected to be IED containers, that were sized between 2 and 5 liters. **Business Standard (12/6/17)**

On 16 DEC, an IED prematurely detonated while a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) militant was allegedly assembling the device in Tral, Pulwama District, Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the JeM member's death. Acting on a tip, police found the body of the militant. **FP (12/16/17)**

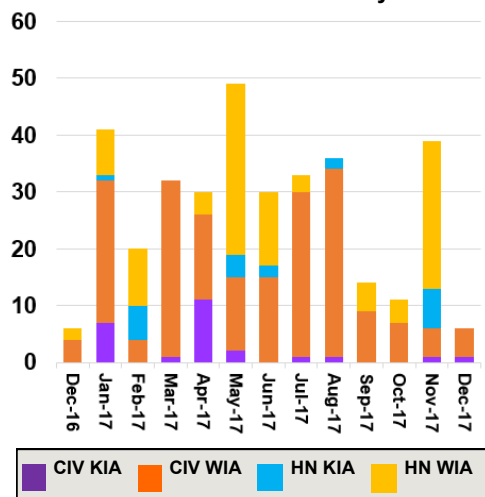
On 17 DEC, an IED was found and cleared by 5th Jammu and Kashmir Army personnel operating with the Assam Rifles during a routine route clearance patrol in Konthoujam, Imphal West District, Imphal. The device reportedly an RCIED that weighed 7kg and used three detonators. **ePao (12/17/17)**

On 26 DEC, Indian Army and police personnel found and cleared an IED cache during an operation in Shergari, Reasi District, Jammu and Kashmir. The cache included one AK-47, one pistol, 23 explosive sticks, two-6kg IEDs, two RPG rounds, one Illumination round, one-.303 rifle with one magazine and 30 rounds, three grenades, one under-barrel grenade launcher, one AK magazine with 81 rounds, a radio set with antenna, and a pistol magazine. **HT**

Past Year IED Events by Type



Past Year IED Event Casualty Count



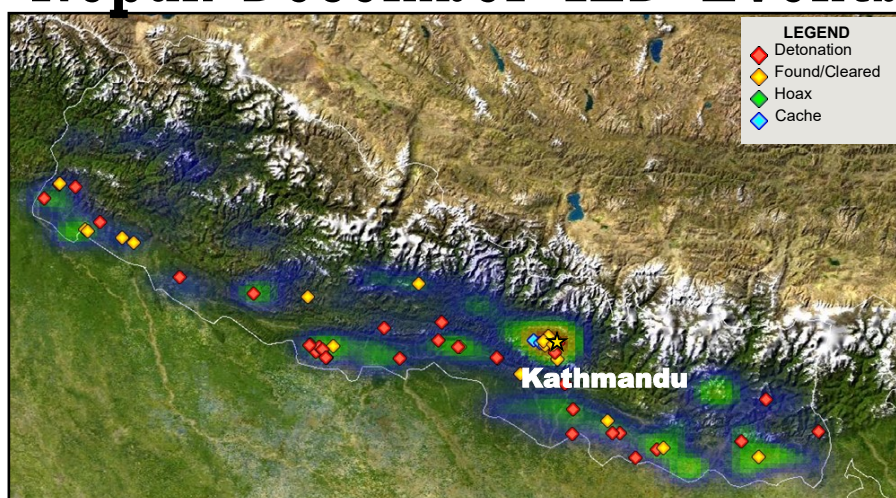
Overall IED activity increased slightly in December, as Maoist and Northeastern insurgent activity remained elevated compared to previous months. While there was sporadic political violence, it remained relatively low. The increase in Maoist incidents can be attributed in part to the PLGA week, where Maoists increase their activity and push outside their normal operating areas to raise awareness of their movement, which explains the additional incident in Telangana.

Another notable event was the cache that was intended for use in Nepal, which lends weight to an emerging view that India is a nexus for explosives contraband in neighboring countries.

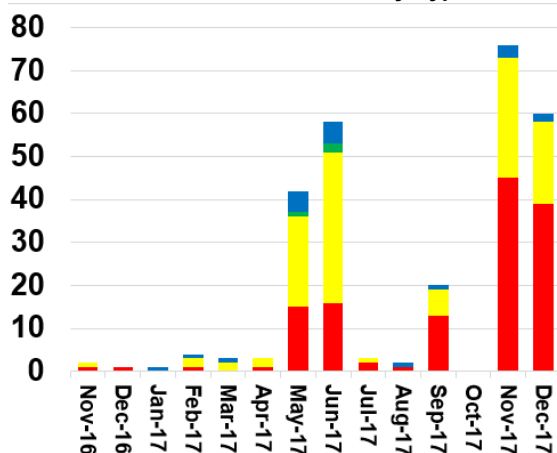
While Jammu and Kashmir incidents have mainly used conventional weapons in 2017, the two incidents this month may be a warning that Jammu and Kashmir militants exploring a return to IED use, thought it would not likely fully materialize until after wintertime, if at all.

IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics should be considered approximations.

Nepal: December IED Events



Past Year IED Events by Type



There were 30 IED detonation events, 19 IED found and cleared events, and two IED cache events.

On 2 DEC, an IED detonated at a political rally in Mayadevi, Kapilbastu, Lumbini. The detonation occurred shortly after the Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist Center's Chairman, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, finished speaking. **Nepal Monitor (12/2/17)**

On 3 DEC, Nepal Army EOD found and cleared a pressure cooker IED from a petrol station in Pokhara Leknath-9, Kaski, Gandaki. **Nepal Monitor (12/4/17)**

On 5 DEC, an IED detonated at Chhreshwor Janata Higher Secondary School in Chhreshwor, Dhanusa, Janakpur. The school was being used as a polling center. **Nepal Monitor (12/6/17)**

On 6 DEC, a gas cylinder IED detonated at the Malika Secondary School in Chaumala, Gauriganga-3, Kailali, Seti. The school was being used as a polling center. **Nepal Monitor (12/6/17)**

On 6 DEC, an IED detonated targeting the Nepal Electricity Authority's Bhaktapur-Baneshwor power line in Duwakot, Bhaktapur, Bagmati. The IED damaged the line and cut power to two towns, disrupting voting. **Nepal Monitor (12/7/17)**

On 7 DEC, an IED detonated at Raja Mahatma Secondary School in Panchanagar, Bardaghat-6, Nawalparasi, Lumbini; five civilians were injured. The school was being used as a polling center. Police described the IED as explosives in an aluminum can buried in the sand. **Nepal Monitor (12/7/17)**

On 14 DEC, a pressure cooker IED on the back of a bicycle detonated in Martyr, Lahan, Siraha, Sagarmatha; one civilian was injured. Local police found pamphlets of the Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha-Revolutionary (JTMM-R) at the scene. It is a common practice for this group to leave propaganda at attack sites. **Nepal Monitor (12/15/17)**

IED activity was lower in December than in November, mainly due to the conclusion of elections on 7 DEC. The vast majority of December's events occurred in the first eight days of the month, with polling centers commonly targeted. Authorities suspect the attacks were meant to frighten the local populace away from voting; this strategy appeared to be somewhat effective in certain areas. Despite the attacks, overall voter turnout was above 70% in most places. In the coming months, IED activity is likely to drop to historical norms.

One notable attack was the 6 DEC detonation of an IED against power infrastructure. Though common in other Asia-Pacific countries, this TTP is very rare in Nepal. Insurgents in other countries, such as Thailand, attack the power lines to discredit the government's ability to protect critical infrastructure. Also unusual was a possible attack by JTMM-R on 14 DEC, an ethnic insurgent group in the Tarai that stayed relatively quiet during the elections. JTMM-R has been responsible for many attacks over the last two years, as they continue to protest Nepal's treatment of minority groups in the Constitution.

IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics should be considered approximations.

Southeast Asia: December Significant Activity

Philippines

On 5 DEC, President Duterte a proclamation formally designating the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) as a terrorist organization. The proclamation was signed pursuant to the provisions of the Human Security Act. Under that law, the CPP-NPA would be considered a terrorist group and anyone proven to be financing them would be held accountable. **PNA (12/5/17)**

On 5 DEC, President Duterte ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) to actively support the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in the war on drugs due to the resurgence in illegal drug activity. This order supersedes the earlier memorandum that designated PDEA and the sole agency to contend with the country's drug problem. The PDEA has made significant strides and implemented reforms in the war on drugs; however, Duterte decided that the PDEA could not do the job alone due to lack of resources.

Inquirer (12/6/17) Rappler (12/7/17)

On 20 DEC, two policemen were released after being held captive for 37 days by the NPA. The two were abducted on 13 NOV while manning an outpost in Surigao del Norte. The release of the two officers came hours after President Duterte declared a unilateral ceasefire with the rebels due to the Christmas holiday. The NPA, in a statement, said the release of their alleged prisoners of war was a gesture of goodwill to promote peace talks.

Minda News (12/20/17) Manila Bulletin (12/21/17)

Thailand

The discovery of the large weapons cache in Chachoengsao on 29 NOV could reignite political turmoil, since the accused are not typical southern insurgents but former military and political figures with known ties to the Red-shirts (formally known as the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship). This event may interfere with the general elections that are scheduled for November 2018. Officials received a tip from a local villager about the cache that was hidden in a rice field. It contained 30 GRD hand grenades, seven PVC pipe bombs, a TNT stick, 52 M79 grenades, three bars of C4, 12 AK-47 magazines each containing 30 rounds of ammunition, one rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) 1,799 7.62 cartridges, and bomb fuses. Officials have linked the cache to the bombings in Bangkok during the 2014 political chaos of pro and anti-government protestors by matching serial numbers to the evidence collected from the events. EOD officials confirmed the cache was not abandoned but intentionally hidden, as the weapons were ready for use. The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) has labeled the discovery a security threat and may extend the political ban that has been in place since the 2014 coup, however it did not state what measures would be taken. Since the discovery, Thai security forces have apprehended five suspects: Wattana Sapwichien, former PM's Office Minister, Jakrapob Pankair, former 3rd Army Deputy Chief Maj Gen Manas Paolik, Somjet Kongwatana and Chaiwat Polpho (aka Peak Kalamae). **The Nation (12/02/17) The Nation (12/2/17) The Nation (12/4/17)**

On DEC 25, the 4812 Rangers unit was conducting vehicle searches at different checkpoints when they were attacked by gunmen in Narathiwat. The incident lasted 20 minutes and the attackers also set a microwave tower on fire. In conjunction with the small arms fire, the suspects used two M-79 grenades. In an effort to escape, the suspects scattered nail spikes on the road; no casualties resulted. **Bangkok Post (12/25/17)**

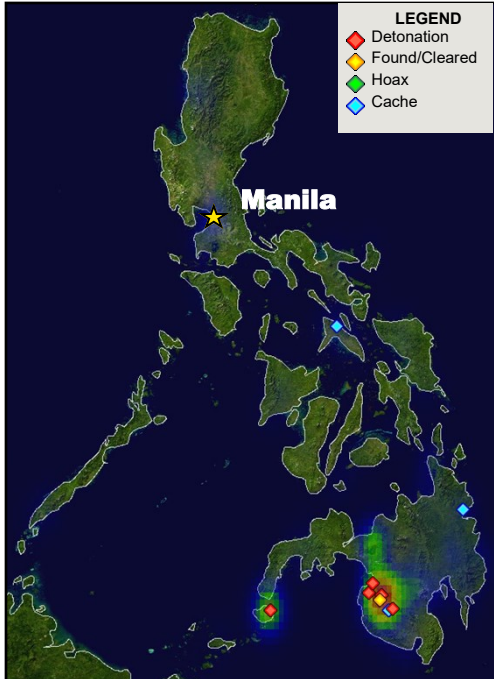
Burma

On 13 DEC, police arrested suspected terrorist Mahar Bayzu Raman in Maungdaw. He was arrested with a Bangladesh registration card, a mobile phone with a Bangladesh SIM and Bangladesh currency approximately equivalent to \$111 USD. **Global New Light of Myanmar (12/16/17)**

Vietnam

On 27 DEC, a court in Ho Chi Minh City sentenced 15 Vietnamese citizens to 5 to 16 years in prison on terrorism charges for attempting to detonate petrol bombs at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in April 2016. Two of the suspects attempted to detonate devices in the airport's parking lot and international terminal. Other suspects carried out other destructive activities or actions considered to be subversive by the Vietnamese government. The suspects are believed to have connections to an anti-Vietnamese government group, the Temporary Vietnam Government, which has a primarily virtual presence online. **VN Express (12/27/17) San Luis Obispo Tribune (12/27/17) RFA (12/27/17)**

Philippines: December IED Events



There were five IED detonation events, one IED found and cleared event, and three IED cache events.

On 2 DEC, an IED cache was recovered in Lianga and San Agustin municipalities, Surigao del Sur province, Caraga region, Mindanao. The cache contained 37 IEDs and various bomb-making materials. It was recovered by the 401st Infantry Brigade during security operations against the New People's Army (NPA). **MB (12/3/17)**

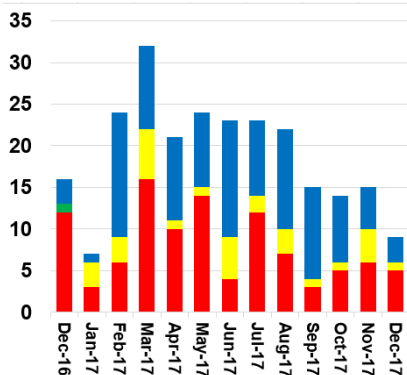
On 7 DEC, security forces recovered an IED cache in the Anday Valley Complex, San Agustin municipality, Surigao del Sur province, Caraga, Mindanao following the capture of an NPA encampment and a brief firefight with the terrorists. The cache contained several IEDs, M203 and M79 grenade launchers, assemblies for M14 and M16 rifles, several 60mm mortars, rifle grenades, handheld radios, and CPP and NPA flags. The camp is believed to be the regional headquarters of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Command and can accommodate up to 200 people. It was equipped with an electric generator, houses, tents, water sources, and cellular phone signal boosters. **Manila Bulletin (12/8/17)**

On 9 DEC, an IED detonated against soldiers in Mirab barangay, Upi town, Maguindanao Province, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Mindanao; seven soldiers were wounded. The soldiers were conducting a security patrol when Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter (BIFF) bandits attacked them with an IED. **ABS-CBN News (12/9/17)**

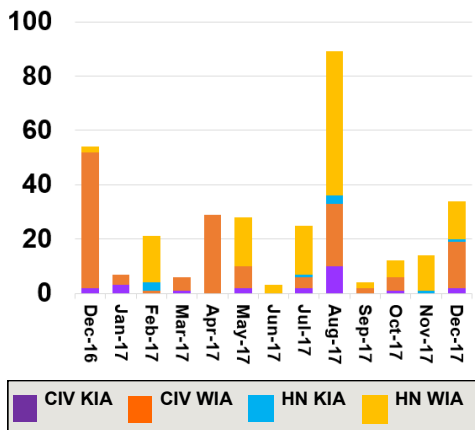
On 26 DEC, an IED detonated after BIFF bandits shot and killed a chieftain at close range in Firis barangay, Datu Saudi-Ampatuan town, Maguindanao, ARMM, Mindanao. The device was composed of explosive powder placed inside a sealed container attached to a long detonating cord. The Philippine Army says the murder was an apparent BIFF retaliation for losing battles with soldiers a few days prior. **Philippine Star (12/27/17) Manila Times (12/28/17)**

On 31 DEC, an IED detonated inside a moving tricycle along National Highway in Buenaflor barangay, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat province, SOCCSKSARGEN region, Mindanao, resulting in two civilians killed and 16 injured civilians. It is unclear who or what the IED was targeting. **Inquirer Mindanao (1/1/18)**

Past Year IED Events by Type



Past Year IED Event Casualty Count



In December, IED activity was down from previous months. The NPA continued with their attacks against military and police. Early in the month, the base of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Command was captured by the Philippine Army which resulted in the recovery of a large cache including IEDs. This large capture coupled with the normal AFP-NPA holiday ceasefire will likely lead to a lower level of attacks in the short term.

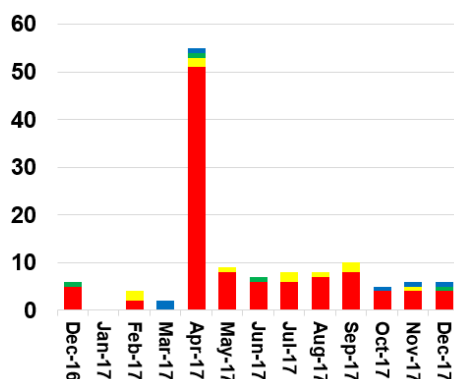
This month, the BIFF came under attack by military airstrikes and ground attacks by the Philippine Army, which resulted in numerous losses. A BIFF training camp was also captured by the army. The military is closely monitoring inconclusive reports of a tactical alliance between the NPA and the BIFF. If reports are accurate, this arrangement will likely be a short-term association.

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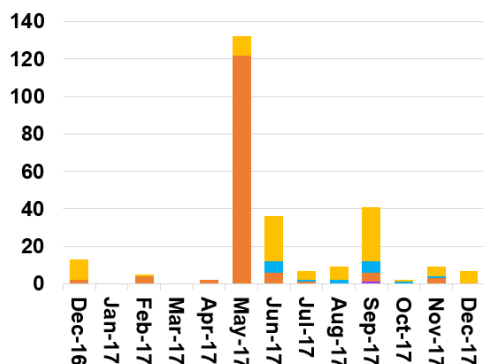
Thailand: December IED Events



Past Year IED Events by Type



Past Year IED Event Casualty Count



There were four IED detonation events, one IED found and cleared event, and one IED cache event.

On 4 DEC, authorities recovered a timed hoax IED from a trash can near the Burmese Embassy entrance in Sathon, Bangkok. The device, found in a red plastic bag, consisted of two PVC pipes taped together and filled with rice. The device also included an alarm clock and electrical wires. **The Irrawaddy (12/4/17) Thai Residents (12/4/17)**

On 6 DEC, an IED detonated along Dusongyor-Rangae road in Chanae, Narathiwat as a paramilitary convoy passed; five paramilitary personnel were injured. The device was described as a metal box weighing 15kg and was concealed by vegetation. **Chiang Rai Times (12/6/17) Bangkok Post (12/7/17)**

On 25 DEC, an undetermined number of suspected IEDs detonated on highway 410 in Beton, Yala causing six power poles to collapse. The result was a blackout for several hours and one damaged car. **Thai PBS (12/26/17)**

On 26 DEC, a roadside IED detonated during a complex attack in Sisakorn District, Narathiwat. The detonation targeted first responders as they were responding to a small arms fire event 30 minutes earlier. The IED detonation injured two rangers despite traveling in an armored vehicle. No additional information regarding the device was reported. **The Nation (12/27/17)**

On 28 DEC, police recovered an IED cache in Takuapa, Phang Nga, following the arrest of two civilians for drug-related offenses. The cache included a red fire extinguisher with the cap removed, a glass tube measuring one centimeter by 67 centimeters, a two-inch nail stapler, and a computer keyboard. After receiving intelligence reports, Thai officials arrested a total of 15 suspects likely linked to the Southern Thai Insurgency for plotting attacks in Phang Nga during New Year's celebrations. **Phuket Gazette (12/28/17) Benar News (12/28/17)**

On 28 DEC, a roadside RCIED detonated targeting a ranger patrol escorting teachers in Ban Sawor Hilae, Tampon Sawor, Narathiwat. No casualties were reported. Post blast analysis suggested that the device was buried, detonated by radio control, and was contained in a metal box weighing between 10-15 kg. **Bangkok Post (12/28/17)**

December's IED activity has been consistent with the past seven months. The increase in IED activity in mid to late December is a common historical pattern, as militants typically target New Year's celebrations.

No new STI TTPs have been recorded at years' end; however, since coordinated and complex attacks targeting security forces increased at the end of December, it is possible that these type of attacks will continue into 2018.

IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics should be considered approximations.

Burma: December IED Events

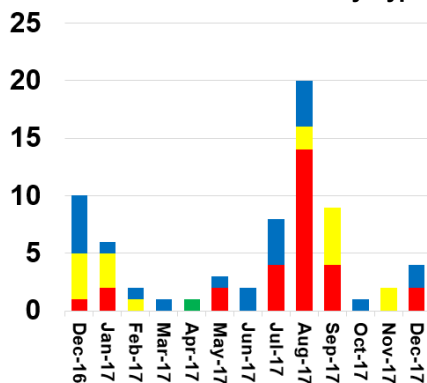


There were two IED detonation events and two IED cache events.

On 31 DEC, a local villager discovered a cache of six IEDs and other related items in the Mrauk Bond Village, Rakhine State. The authorities were later contacted about the cache discovery. **Eleven Myanmar (1/2/18)**

Low IED activity in Burma is attributed to the indirection of illicit logistical operations by Burmese security forces. The disruption of supply activities will likely correspond to a diminished IED threat for several months.

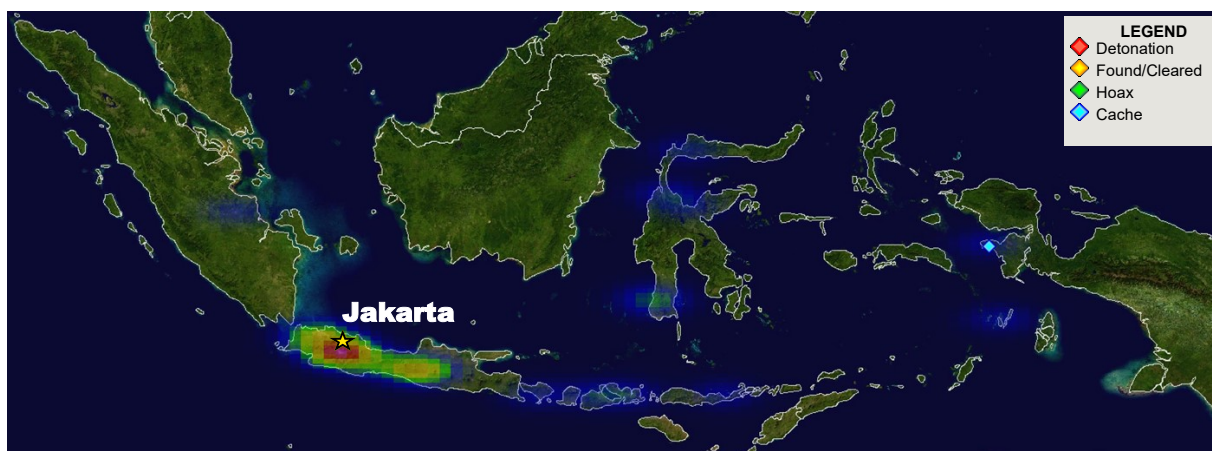
Past Year IED Events by Type



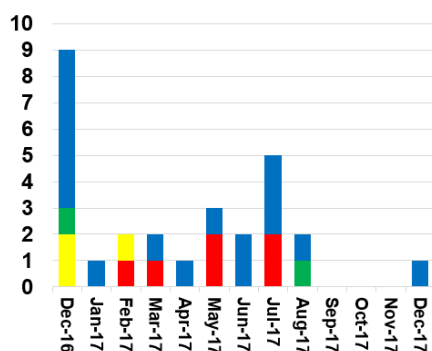
IED reporting and casualty statistics derived from open sources are not confirmed; statistics should be considered approximations.

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Indonesia December IED Events



Past Year IED Events by Type



There was one IED cache event.

On 12 DEC, authorities recovered an IED cache from fishermen believed to be involved in blast fishing activity in the waters near Uisang Island, Farak and Arguni Bay, Sorong in West Papua province. Police arrested 14 fishermen and recovered 97 “fish bombs” and two bags of potassium. **Antara News (12/13/17)**

The December IED cache event was not particularly notable; blast fishing activity is extremely common in Southeast Asia. However, it was the first IED event in four months, which is an unusually lengthy period of tranquility for Indonesia.

What is also unusual is that the holiday season is usually the time period when religiously motivated attacks and terrorism activity in Indonesia spikes, as seen in the December 2016 column on the IED events chart. However, Indonesia was uncharacteristically quiet this year.

The pre-Christmas terror sweep (18 suspects arrested) does not fully explain the dearth of activity either, because the security services in Indonesia accomplish this nearly every year prior to the holidays to disrupt potential plots. Moreover, Indonesia’s heightened security presence does not completely account for the observed limited activity.

There are several elements that could explain the lull in terrorist activity. First, the number of deployed security personnel was up from last year, from 150,000 to 180,000. Second, it is possible that militants were focused on conducting operations abroad, most notably in Syria, Iraq, and the Philippines. Finally, increasing pressure by Indonesian counterterrorism units continues to degrade Indonesian threat networks.

Northeast Asia: December Significant Activity

China

In early December, a newly released Human Rights Watch report claimed authorities in the Chinese territory of Xinjiang are collecting biometric data of millions of residents in what the United Nations (UN) has called a gross violation of international human rights norms. Xinjiang is home to a multitude of ethnic and religious minorities, with Muslims making up around 40% of the population. Critics view the biodata collection as a means for ethnic or religious discrimination and police profiling; a charge denied by Chinese authorities. As of 2015 the database has reached some 44 million entries, making it the world's largest for biometric data collection. Beijing continues to use the fear of religious terrorism to justify the expansion of rules and regulations pertaining to biometric data, particularly the data for minority groups. The UN has warned against further development of the database, citing the particularly abusive potential and violation of human privacy rights. China remains undeterred by national and international criticism. **CNN (12/12/17) Human Rights Watch (12/13/17)**

Japan

In late December, Pakistan and Japan engaged in their third round of counterterrorism talks in Islamabad, Pakistan. The consultations were led by Tasnim Aslam of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Eiji Yamamoto, Ambassador to Japan's Ambassador in charge of International Cooperation for Countering Terrorism and International Organized Crime. The consultations included an exchange of views on the threat posed by ISIS and Pakistan's recent counterterrorism successes. Both parties agreed to continue their constructive and cordial discussions in the future. **The Nation (12/20/17)**

IED Calendar

The IED calendar was established to help our audience maintain awareness of events, such as anniversaries of major attacks, or political, religious or cultural events that often coincide (or can potentially coincide) with a spike in IED events.

6 DEC 1992 (IND): Babri Masjid Mosque Destruction

7 DEC (NEP): National Elections

14 DEC (IND): ULFA Revenge Day

16 DEC (BNG): Victory Day

22 DEC (IND): CPI-M Military Wing Anniversary

25 DEC (IND): Christmas Attack Anniversary

4 JAN (BUR): Independence Day

26 JAN (IND): Republic Day

Late January to early February (WW): Attacks have coincided with the anniversary of worldwide protests to Danish Cartoons in 2006

28 FEB (THA): First time Thai Gov. and insurgents sign a peace agreement

IND – India
NEP – Nepal
BUR – Burma
BNG – Bangladesh
THA – Thailand
WW – Worldwide

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
December 2017	26	27	28	29	30	1	2
	3	4	5	6 IND	7 NEP	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14 IND	15	16 BNG
	17	18	19	20	21	22 IND	23
	24	25 IND	26	27	28	29	30
	31	1	2	3	4 BUR	5	6
January 2018	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22 WW	23 WW	24 WW	25 WW	26 IND WW	27 WW
	28 WW	29 WW	30 WW	31 WW	1 WW	2 WW	3 WW
February 2018	4 WW	5 WW	6 WW	7 WW	8 WW	9 WW	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28 THA	1	2	3

Common Terms and Acronyms

AN – Ammonium Nitrate
 ANFO – Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil
 ARMM – Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
 CIV – Civilian
 CBRN – Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
 COIN – Counter-insurgency
 CWIED – Command Wire IED
 DTMF – Dual-Tone Multi-Frequency
 EFP – Explosively Formed Projectile
 EOD – Explosive Ordnance Disposal
 F/C – Found & Cleared
 HME – Homemade Explosives
 HN – Host Nation (Police, Military, Government)
 IDF – Indirect Fire
 IDP – Internally Displaced Persons
 IED – Improvised Explosive Device
 KFR – Kidnap for Ransom
 KIA – Killed in Action
 LOC – Line of Communication
 LPG – Liquefied Petroleum Gas
 MSR – Main Supply Routes
 NFI – No Further Information
 NSTR – Nothing Significant To Report
 PBA – Post Blast Analysis
 PBIED – Personnel Borne (Suicide Bomb) IED

PCB – Printed Circuit Board
 PN – Partner Nation
 PPIED – Pressure Plate IED
 QRF – Quick Response Force
 RCIED – Radio Controlled IED
 RCP – Route Clearance Patrols
 RPG – Rocket Propelled Grenade
 SA – South Asia
 SAF – Small Arms Fire
 SEA – Southeast Asia
 SVBIED – Suicide Vehicle Borne IED
 TATP – Triacetone Triperoxide
 TNT – Trinitrotoluene (C₇H₅N₃O₆)
 TTP – Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
 UXO – Unexploded Ordnance
 VBIED – Vehicle Borne IED
 VEO – Violent Extremist Organization
 VOIED – Victim Operated IED
 WIA – Wounded in Action

Governments, Groups and Organizations

ASG – Abu Sayyaf Group
 BIFF – Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
 BIPP – Barisan Islam Perberbasan Patani
 BRN-C – Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Coordinate
 BSF – Border Security Forces
 BNP – Bangladesh National Party
 BriMob – Mobile Brigade (Indonesia CT Forces)
 CPI-M – Communist Party of India (Maoist)
 CPN-M – Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
 CPP – Communist Party of the Philippines
 CRPF – Central Reserve Police Force (India)
 GMIP – Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Patani
 HM – Hizb-ul-Mujahideen
 HNLC – Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (India)
 HUJI-B – Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami Bangladesh
 IB – India's Intelligence Bureau
 IM – Indian Mujahideen
 IrW – Irregular Warfare
 ISI – Inter-Services Intelligence (Pakistan)
 ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq ash Sham
 JAT – Jemaah Ansharout Tauhid
 JI – Jemaah Islamiya
 JTMM – Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha
 JIB – Jemaat-e-Islami Bangladesh
 JeM – Jaish-e-Mohammed

JMB – Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh
 JMJB – Jama'atul Muslim Janta Bangladesh
 KIA – Kachin Independence Army
 KIM – Khalifa Islamiya Mindanao
 KIO – Kachin Independence Organization
 LeT – Lashkar-e Tayyiba
 MILF – Moro Islamic Liberation Front
 MILF-SOG – MILF-Special Operations Group
 MNLF – Moro National Liberation Front
 NPA – New People's Army
 PNP – Philippine National Police
 POLRI – Indonesian National Police
 PULO – Patani United Liberation Organization
 RAB – Rapid Action Battalion (Bangladesh)
 RKK – Runda Kumpulan Kecil
 SJMM – Samyukta Jatiya Mukti Morcha
 SJTMM – Samyukta Jana Tantrik Terai Mukti Morcha
 ULFA – United Liberation Front of Assam
 UWSA – United Wa State Army
 YCL – Youth Communist League